



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October 10 deadline looms for water flex accounts

TOPEKA – Water right holders who would like some leeway in how they use their water appropriation from year to year have until Oct. 10 to apply for a term permit that allows for more flexible water use over a five-year period that begins Jan. 1, 2003.

Multiyear flex accounts were approved by the 2001 Legislature, and the chief engineer of the Kansas Department of Agriculture's division of water resources is finalizing the rules and regulations that govern them.

The flex account option is available only to vested and certified groundwater water right holders, and it is based on historical use rather than authorized quantities.

"I'm sure there were some groundwater users this year who could have benefitted from the flexibility this new provision allows," said David Pope, chief engineer of the division of water resources. "It's one tool that can help irrigators deal with variations in precipitation from year to year."

Under the flex account term permit, water users establish a five-year allotment based on an average of their actual use during the previous five years, less a 10 percent conservation amount required by law and excluding any amount used in excess of the authorized quantity. An alternate five-year span can be used to determine average historical use if a water right holder can show that significant water conservation measures were implemented during the five years preceding the application.

Once the allotment is established, that base amount is drawn down each year by the amount of water that is used. Water use in any one year may exceed a water right holder's appropriated amount, and unlimited water use in a single year is possible, as long as overall use for the five-year period does not exceed the total allotment.

Staff in the division of water resources field offices are prepared to answer questions about flex accounts and to help water users complete the forms needed to establish them. Those offices are in Topeka (785) 368-8251; Garden City (620) 276-2901; Stafford (620) 234-5311; and Stockton (785) 425-6787.

Applications received after Oct. 10 will be accepted, but flex accounts for those individuals will not go into effect until Jan. 1, 2004.